THE

ROSCIAD

OF

Covent-Garden, &c.

(Price One Shilling and Sixpence.)

THE

ROSCIAD

OF

C -- V -- N T - G -- R D -- N.

By the AUTHOR.

What the Muſe *freely thinks, ſhe'll freely ſpeak,*
With juſt diſdain of ev'ry paltry ſneer;
Stranger alike to Flatt'ry and to Fear.

CHURCHILL.

LONDON:

Printed for the AUTHOR, and ſold by J. GRETTON, in *Old Bond-Street*; and W. NICOLL, in *St. Paul's Church-Yard.* 1762.

ADVERTISEMENT.

STRUCK with the beauties of Mr. CHURCHILL's ROSCIAD, *and convinced of the utility of ſo excellent a performance, as well to the public, as to the player, by pointing out the errors, and placing the ſeveral merits, of the latter, in the cleareſt light; I have undertaken to give the characters of thoſe (and thoſe only) whom Mr.* CHURCHILL *has thought unworthy of a place in his poem. I do not pretend to any rivalſhip with that gentleman, as I am too ſenſible my ſtile falls infinitely ſhort of his; but if the public (as I have reaſon to hope they will) ſhould find theſe characters drawn with juſtice and candour; I flatter myſelf that will, in ſome meaſure, atone for any faults they may find in my verſification.*

THE

ROSCIAD

OF

C — V — N T-G — R D — N.

HOW DRURY's ſons in order paſs'd along,
Is well expreſs'd in CHURCHILL's genuine ſong:
But tho' his pen 'bove *partial ſcandal* roſe;
Tho' ev'ry line with *ſtricteſt candour* flows;
Yet he declines to ſing the diſtant claim
Of *Covent-Garden* to the ſeat of Fame.----

. . . . . .

THAT be my Taſk.----Tho' all unfit I ſeem
To ſnatch from CHURCHILL's hand the glorious theme;

Tho' ready wait thoſe monſters, call'd *Reviews*,
To cruſh the products of each *infant*-muſe:
Yet, undiſmay'd, unaw'd, I'll boldly ſtand,
And graſp the rod of Juſtice in my hand;
With all my force purſue his gen'rous plan,
And laſh the *Actor*, whilſt I ſpare the *Man*.

" Now give kind DULNESS memory and rhyme,
" We'll put off GENIUS till another time."

THUS ſung the Bard!---- Tho' ev'ry ſentence ſhew'd
That Genius follow'd as his numbers flow'd.
No daring flights will grace theſe lines, I fear;
But what our judgment ſpeaks, with candour hear.

A TRAIN of ſingers lead the motly band,
Who tune the voice at TOMMY ARNE's command.

First Lampe and Young come on---- a uſeful pair,
To join in chorus, or to ſcream an air.

Next Brent appears!---- Brent wholly form'd to pleaſe,
With ſweeteſt melody, and ſprightly eaſe:
When firſt as Polly on the ſtage ſhe ſung,
With what loud peals the ſhouting Playhouſe rung!
Her tongue, in ev'ry heart, new life inſpir'd----
Pleas'd, we beheld, we wonder'd, and admir'd.

Next Beard approach'd, well ſkill'd our breaſts to chear----
Who charms alike, by judgment and by ear.----
But that the Muſe the arduous taſk declines,
As all too ſerious for her ſportive lines;
She to thy fame could greater trophies raiſe,
Than e'er ſhall celebrate the ſinger's praiſe;
Could ſay with what delightful eaſe you blend,
At once, the *Man*, the *Huſband*, and the *Friend*;

And

And tho' not bleſt with title, or eſtate,
Ar't lov'd, and honour'd, ev'n amidſt the great:
Unbought by int'reſt, undiſmay'd by fear;
Polite, tho' honeſt; courteous, yet ſincere:----
But hold!---- leſt, dwelling on this worthy man
Too much, I wander from my *promis'd plan.*

If fine proportion, or a lovely face,
To modeſt carriage join'd, and decent grace,
Might the *Decree* of this our *Court* command,
Or ſtrike the *Sword* of *Juſtice* from our hand,
Which of the *C-v-nt-G-rd-en* chiefs would dare
To ſtrive with Ab[illegible]gg for the envied *Chair?*
But we, unmov'd by favour, or by hate,
Free, and impartial as the hand of fate,
With cold indiff'rence ev'ry charm muſt view,
Nor give the vacant wreath, but where 'tis due.

Nor ſhall the loweſt here remain unſung;
Haltom and Dunstal, Castello and Y---ng;
B-ck, T-nd-l, M-rt-n, B-nn-t, D-v-s, H----,
P-rry conceited, and M-cg-re the dull:
Let R-dm-n, L-w-s, ſtrangers to the Nine,
With G-rdn-r, W-gn-l, in my numbers ſhine;
And many more, who, tho' to Fame unknown,
By fancy'd Merit, think the Palm their own.

Ah! What could tempt thee, Gibson, in an age
Enlighten'd as this is, to tread the Stage?
If gentle Dulness happily had laid
Thy genius in the ſoft'ning arms of trade,
Thou might'ſt have learn'd, perhaps, by dint of art,
To botch a waiſtcoat better than thy part.

Then follow'd Anderson---- Whoſe humble name
Stands unrecorded in the book of Fame:

No purple robe, emboſs'd with gold, he wears;----
His head no crown, his hand no ſcepter bears:
In ev'ry ſcene, in ev'ry word, we find
The ſymptoms of a dull unfeeling mind;----
Whether in poor RODOLPHO's peaceful part,
His *ſtupid* words flow from his *ſtupid* heart;
Whilſt nature can't one varied feature lend,
To mourn the fortune of his prince and friend:
Or, when enrag'd at PISTOL's ſwagg'ring ſpeech,
His angry foot ſalutes the boaſter's breech.

SMEKS (when enough he had admir'd his face,
And fix'd upon each action, each grimace;
When he had nicely *parted ſmile from frown*,
Each look, each geſture, mark'd diſtinctly down,)
Put in his claim---- And ſaid no Actor e'er
Was half ſo uſeful to a Manager;

For who, like him, can ſhift from part to part,
By nature *dull*, yet *duller* made by art?
When he attempts to ſhew or rage, or fear,
Some frightful grin, or ſome affected ſneer,
Dwells on his face, his voice no diff'rence knows,
But ever in the ſame *dull channel* flows.

NEXT CRESWICK comes!---- CR-SW-CK, who vainly tries,
With action not his own, to cheat our eyes;
With cadence forc'd, and imitation mean,
He apes OBRIEN in each mangled ſcene.
When I behold a fooliſh, fix'd grimace,
Twiſt ev'ry varied muſcle of his face;
Whilſt on his mouth a dull unmeaning grin
Labours and ſtrains, one gentle clap to win;
I hate to ſprightly wit his falſe pretence,
And curſe, enrag'd, his *ten-fold impudence*.----

When

When, as a Fop, in lace, ſuperbly dreſs'd,
What thouſand joys are in his eyes expreſs'd!
Form'd, in his own opinion, quite to pleaſe;
Striving at humour, and affecting eaſe;
He thinks no actor can with him compare,
For graceful manner, and engaging air;
The envy'd *Chair*, by fancy'd worth, he gains,
Which ſprings, like PALLAS, from its father's brains.
His voice refuſing nature to obey,
With miſplac'd accents murders ev'ry play;
And whilſt he violates her ſterling laws,
Stares at the wond'ring gall'ries for applauſe.
So have I ſeen a haughty Peacock ſtride,
With pompous ſtep, and ſpread his plumy pride;
Now raiſe aloft, to view his glofſy tail;
Now on the ground his gaudy feathers trail;
'Till having fated all beholders eyes,
His vanity to ſomething more would riſe;

'Cauſe with ſuch various lights his colours glow;
Harmonious too his hoarſe rough voice muſt flow;
His hoarſe rough voice removes our firſt delight,
And all the *Coxcomb* ſtands before our ſight.

Next ſullen Cl[illegible]ke advanc'd, with penſive air;
Cloudy his brow, and overhung with care.
Spight of himſelf, in ev'ry varied ſcene,
He mixes with his part his native ſpleen;
Which wraps his vain attempts in gloomy night,
As gath'ring miſts obſcure the fading light:
But, when he ſhines as Osmond, in whoſe breaſt
Are all the paſſions of his own expreſs'd,
So ſtrong his feelings, and ſo juſt each pauſe,
That ev'n envy can't deny applauſe:
Then for a ruffian, I dare bet a ſhilling,
M-ckl-n himſelf ne'er look'd a thorougher villain;

Altho', my friend, once ſtrip him of his part,
'S a very honeſt fellow at his heart.

NEXT DEER came on, by nature's hand deſign'd
To pleaſe each hearer, and to charm each mind;
So juſt, ſo true, the ſervant's part he plays,
That all muſt own he well deſerves our praiſe.---
Nor let the monarchs of the ſtage, who ſit
On pageant thrones, deſpiſe the footman's wit:
Merit, to all alike, will honour bring,
Whether they act the *Valet* or the *King*.
Nor can we leſs applaud his mimic rage,
When loud he ſwaggers round the trembling ſtage;
And whilſt his words the bluſt'ring hero ſpeak,
Tamely ſubmits to eat FRIZLAIN's leek.
But when from *Common-Senſe* he goes aſtray,
To follow where his fancy leads the way,

Begins

Begins the ſcene, where moſt he ſhines, to quit,
And imitates the ſprightly coxcomb's wit:
We muſt thoſe parts, ſo ill employ'd deplore,
Whoſe native luſtre charm'd ſo oft before.

O ALL ye followers of THEATRA's train!
Liſten attentive to this uſeful ſtrain:
So ſhall ye enter fearleſs on the ſtage;
Prais'd and applauded in the niceſt age.

WHATEVER plan your genius points to view,
With ſtricteſt force that plan alone purſue:
Hearken to manly reaſon's powerful voice,
And let her dictates only, ſway your choice;
Obey the ſummons which her tongue inſpires,
Nor take for real judgment vain deſires.
In acting, as in life, we ſtill ſhall find
Diff'rent employments ſuit each diff'rent mind:

This

This man, with moſt ſucceſs, can undertake
The ruin'd gameſter, or the ſhatter'd rake;
While this, with more conſpicuous grace, will ſhine
In the grave cadence of the tragic line.
But if, obedient to their fickle hearts,
Theſe ſhould agree to make exchange of parts,
How would their fond attempt their fame betray!
And how their action mangle ev'ry play!
Whate'er our ſanguine wiſhes may ſuggeſt,
Some talent always will excel the reſt;
Or, if one perfect actor there can be,
O GARRICK! we muſt own, 'tis only Thee.

NEXT, GREEN, and P-TT, a laughing plotting pair
Their claims as romping chambermaids declare:
Who can, like P-TT, ſo happily expreſs
The ſaucy manner, and the pert addreſs?

Like her, in unaffected airs excel,
Or act the favour'd ſervant half ſo well?
Or who, O Gr--n! of all the female throng,
Can match thy volubility of tongue?
With ſo much eaſe you art and nature mix,
Provoke our laughter, and our judgment fix,
That ev'ry candid hearer muſt confeſs,
Ev'n ſprightly Clive, herſelf, has charm'd us leſs.

Then B-rd-n comes, curſing her lowly ſtate;
No guards attend her, and no laquies wait:
"And ſhall I ne'er the heroine act? (ſhe cries)
"Ne'er to ſo great a dignity ariſe!
"Shall I to third-rate parts be ſtill confin'd?
"Still with my worth obſcurely lag behind?
"Still ſhall my genius in the farce be ſeen;
"Which might, with grace, adorn the *Tragic Queen*."

Ah! B-rd-n, to the farce thyſelf confine;
'Tis there you pleaſe us, and 'tis there you ſhine:
This fev'riſh thirſt of boundleſs praiſe reſtrain,
And where your fate has plac'd you, there remain.
Let not the ſelfiſh voice of female pride,
From reaſon's dictates draw your heart aſide;
'Tis better (liſt'ning to her friendly call)
To ſhine a Lucy, than a *Queen* to fall.

Next Vincent comes, in robes of purple clad;
Who ſimpers, tho' her part be e'er ſo ſad;
Whoſe ſcrieching voice one's very brain diſtracts,
Whoſe action makes one grieve ſhe ever acts.
When ſounding Martian's ſteady ſoul ſhe's ſeen,
And as Pulcheria ſtrives to ape a queen,
We plainly ſee, with no great ſtretch of art,
She minds her perſon much more than her part;----

Better

Better to ſhew her airs, and affectation,
She walks a peereſs at the *Coronation*;
Of borrow'd robes ſeems not a little proud,
And ſtruts, like *******, thro' the gazing croud.

See Elmy ſlow advance, with decent grace;
A modeſt diffidence mark'd in her face:
She is not envious of another's praiſe,
Nor by their fall deſires herſelf to raiſe.
How well, how juſt, ſhe plays! in Gertrude's part!
When injur'd Hamlet wrings her guilty heart;
Her glowing features burning rage expreſs,
Temper'd with filial love, and deep diſtreſs:
Action and mein, their various merits join;
And when ſhe ſpeaks, with force united ſhine.

With ſolemn ſtep, ſad look, and tearful eye,
See Ward, with graceful elegance, paſs by!

Thrice

Thrice happy actreſs! form'd by Nature's hand,
To rule the heart, the paſſions to command,----
To make us weep poor CONSTANCE' wretched fate,----
To raiſe 'gainſt tyrant JOHN our utmoſt hate.
When in the virtuous VIOLANTE's part,
Thou ſpeaks the *real feelings* of thy heart,
We ceaſe to *wonder!*---- thou haſt not diſclos'd
A *ſecret* in thy faithful breaſt repos'd.

FORM'D as thou art, O HAMILTON! to pleaſe,
With ſprightly wit, and unaffected eaſe;
Should I omit thy praiſes to rehearſe,
Nor with thy name adorn my humble verſe;
I ſhould to candour forfeit all pretence,
And publiſh to the world my want of ſenſe.
When in LEE's bombaſt ſcenes, with noble mein,
Thou ſpeaks the fury of an injur'd queen,

Whoſe

Whoſe tortur'd heart ten thouſand paſſions move,
Rival'd, at once, in honour, and in love;
Gods! what keen hate thy angry eyes diſcloſe!—
What dreadful fire in ev'ry feature glows!—
When pale STATIRA labours to aſſwage,
With ſuppliant tears, thy unrelenting rage;
Whilſt in her breaſt thou ſheath'ſt the vengeful knife,
And, for her crime, exact'ſt her forfeit life;
The words thou utter'ſt "vibrate in my ear,"
Freeze up my blood, and chill my ſoul with fear.
Nor leſs conſpicuous does thy merit riſe,
When *Comic-humour* decks thy laughing eyes.
In ROSALIND, thy native arts excite,
At once, our admiration and delight.
Here could I ſtop,—but Oh! my taſk is ſuch,
I muſt not praiſe too little, or too much:
The candid judge (to neither ſide inclin'd)
Should ſpeak the real dictates of his mind.

Tho' H-M-LT-N with wit, and grace endow'd,
Beams forth ſuperior to the *common crowd*;
Yet with too great a force her ſpirits play,
And tear the actreſs from herſelf away;
Whilſt artificial ſmiles, and ſtrong grimace,
Contract her eye-brows, and diſtort her face;
She ſtrips her humour of its native dreſs,
And ſtrives to charm us more, by charming leſs.

THE *Tragic-muſe*, attending by her ſide,
See BELLAMY advance, with conſcious pride!
Behold her ſhine in SIGISMUNDA's part!
Whilſt ev'ry word flows from her love-ſick heart:—
When ſlighted, and deceiv'd, ſhe ſcorns the youth
Who barters, for a crown, his vows and truth;
Not PRITCHARD's ſelf can greater rage expreſs,
Or ſtronger paint reſentment in diſtreſs.

But when his faith is clear'd---- Alas! too late!
And ſhe, in tears, laments their hapleſs fate;
Whilſt ſtruggle in her breaſt, with dreadful ſtrife,
The injur'd lover, and the virtuous wife;
CIBBER, with envy, might the conflict ſee,
Nor bluſh, O BELLAMY!---- to act like thee.

No longer be it ſaid, that haughty FRANCE
Excels BRITANNIA in the ſprightly dance.
How vain that thought, by VERNON's worth is ſhown,
At once her country's champion, and her own.
Nor let HESPERIAN Eunuchs proudly boaſt,
That melting lays in BRITISH mouths are loſt;
Since taught by thee, we learn at length to know,
More pleaſing ſounds from ENGLISH tongues can flow:
Yet ſome there are, no doubt, who dance as well,
And (if you equal) BRENT, you don't excel.

But ſay, another woman can we find,
Where ſinging, dancing, action, all are join'd?
That merit ever will ſuperior riſe,
Which no one ſingle ſtudied object ties:
Fixt to one part, ev'n YATES can pleaſe the town,
Only becauſe the man himſelf's a clown.
Round the wide world, the mariner will roam,
But is an errant blockhead found at home:
The truly great alone, are always bright;
CÆSAR, and GARRICK, ſhine in ev'ry light.

Now ROSS awaken'd, rubb'd his drowſy eyes,
And from STATIRA's feet began to riſe:
" Shall not my worth (he cries) put in its claim?
" Shall ſuch great Merit loſe its right to Fame?
" Shall ev'ry petty, puny actor dare
" To puſh his int'reſt for the *Vacant Chair*,

" Whoſe low, unworthy name in bills ne'er ſhone,
" But as a ſervant, or a fop, alone?
" Whilſt mighty I, did not ſo much as *dream*
" One ſingle word of all this well-wrought ſcheme.
" Which of you all will dare your power to try,
" Or ev'n, in thought, attempt with me to vie?
" I, who the chief of all theſe legions ſtand,
" Firſt of the Clan, and greateſt in command.

" In famous DRURY's foſt'ring Green-room bred,
" I drew my action from the fountain head;
" 'Till ſpur'd by honour, quite ambitious grown,
" I left my maſter, for this mighty throne;
" For now, whatever envious bards may ſing,
" In theſe fair ſpacious realms, I reign as king.
" Tho' Fame has publiſh'd, with her black'ning voice,
" That this my change was not th' effect of choice;

" But that my tutor, finding all his pains
" Could not reduce me from my ranting ſtrains;
" But on my *ſtupid* head his care was loſt,
" Scorn'd his advices, and his precepts croſs'd;
" Call'd me a *dunce*, and bade me, in a rage,
" Seek out employment on an eaſier ſtage:
" But theſe are fictions of an idle mind,
" Whoſe tongue to biting ſcandal is inclin'd.
" All muſt my well-feign'd tenderneſs approve,
" When from my mouth I pour ſoft ſtrains of love;
" So ſmooth, ſo gentle, all my accents creep,
" They always lull the audience half aſleep.----
" But when, as AMMON's *Son*, I grieve in ſtate,
" And mourn my lovely captive's hapleſs fate;
" Whilſt ev'ry hope, ev'n of revenge, is fled,
" No thunder left to blaſt her murd'rers's head;
" With what a manly voice my paſſion ſounds!
" How from the ſcence the roaring cry rebounds!

" How

" How down the ſtage the ratt'ling tempeſt flies,
" 'Till drown'd in loud applauſe, the deep-mouth'd clamour dies!

" Since my demand then, and my right are known,
" I claim the ſeat of Roscius as my own:
" On noiſy praiſe let others build their pride,
" Whilſt I alone in real worth confide.
" O *Tragic*, and, O *Comic Muſe!* attend;
" In me behold your patron, and your friend;
" Your hopes I'll favour, and your faults I'll pardon;
" For I the G-rr-ck am, of *C-v-nt-G-rd-n.*"----

" Hold there! (cries Smith) I too put in my plea;
" I, ſure, deſerve the *Chair* as well as thee;
" But ne'er, like thee, will proſtitute my voice,
" To gain, by ſelf-applauſe, the public choice.
" Let others boaſt their parts, in vaunting ſtrain,
" Whilſt I the low, unmanly trick diſdain;

" Nor

" Nor ſhall it e'er be ſaid, my bragging tongue,
" In other's ears, my own perfections rung."

Ah! modeſt youth; tho' thou declin'ſt that taſk,
Which ſome, perhaps, with too much ardour aſk;
Yet muſt not we forget, O Smith! to praiſe
Thoſe merits which our admiration raiſe.
When as the British conq'ring prince you ſtand,
The pride and honour of his native land;
Who mov'd with rage at Gallia's rude replies,
Contemns her armies, and her force defies;
In manly firmneſs clad, with eaſe we trace
The king and hero in thy ſpeaking face;
And ev'ry ſentence, ev'ry word that flows,
With all the fire of matchleſs Shakespeare glows.

Some always conn their labour'd parts by note,
Like Parrots, that are taught to prate by rote;

Glide

Glide o'er the nervous verſe with cadence fine,
Or boldly thunder out the tender line.
Not ſo you act, to happier cuſtoms bred,
With care inſtructed, and by wiſdom led;
Taught and improv'd by learning's ſacred lore,
Her ſteps you follow, and her paths explore;
So mix with native arts, becoming ſkill,
That foes muſt praiſe you, tho' againſt their will.
But thoſe to whom thy private worth is known,
Virtue and freedom join'd, with me, will own,
That tho', ev'n G-RR-CK's ſelf, thou ſhouldſt excel,
Thy leaſt perfection would be acting well.

But who is this comes on with decent pride?
Nature her teacher, and the *Muſe* her guide:
No low fineſſes in her parts we find,
That ſtrike the head, not captivate the mind;

But all thoſe genuine feelings, ſtriking fires,
Which her great Tutor, in her breaſt, inſpires.
When in the tragic ſtrain, with mournful light,
She ſhines, like LUNA, 'midſt the ſhades of night,
Who can behold her cheeks with paſſion glow,
Her hapleſs boſom ſtruck with heart-felt woe,
See her, like JULIET, drop the melting tear,
Or lift the dagger, with LUCRETIA's air?
And not, with her, the dreadful anguiſh feel,
Nor graſp, in thought, th' imaginary ſteel.
But tho' ſo well ſhe plays the tragic queen,
She ſhines ſuperior in the comic ſcene;
There beams her ſterling wit, with gentle ray,
Serenely chearful, and politely gay:
But moſt ſhe charms when in the rake's diſguiſe,
She cheats, at once, our ſenſes and our eyes;
With eaſy freedom apes the coxcomb's rage,
And ſtruts, and ſwaggers all around the ſtage,

Since thus deſcribed, why ſhould my pen proclaim,
What all muſt know---- That MACKLIN is her name.

Now all their claims are heard; but who ſhall dare
To place a rival in the envied *Chair?*
Since ev'n the candidates themſelves muſt own,
CHURCHILL has giv'n it where 'tis due alone.

Now ſhall I yield, in theſe nice-judging days,
To public cenſure's voice, my humble lays.----
How can I hope my all-unworthy *Muſe*,
Will 'ſcape the malice of thoſe fell *Reviews?*
Who ('cauſe the ROSCIAD's *Author* dar'd reflect
On the *low Maſter* of their *paltry Sect*)
By that great hero, mighty SM-LL-T led,
Pour all that feeble vengeance on his head.
Tho' freedom reigns in CHURCHILL's mighty rhymes,
Beyond the genius of theſe leaden times;

Tho'

Tho' ev'ry line with *Muſic* flows along,
As POPE, harmonious, and as DRYDEN, ſtrong:
Yet, 'cauſe with ſacred Truth, he dar'd invade
The actors, in their own theatric ſhade;
With well-wrought *Satire*, mov'd to idle rage,
The *mighty Monarchs* of the BRITISH ſtage.;
The manly roughneſs of his verſe they blame,
And blacken, with reproach, his glorious name.

THO' favour'd POPE, with more than wanton ſport,
Attack'd the *Church*, the *Senate*, and the *Court*;
As fancy mov'd, directed *Scandal*'s dart;
Wounded the good, and ſooth'd the guilty heart;
The ſervile *Critic* hails him, with his pen,
The firſt of mortals, and the beſt of men.

In vain, alas! deceiv'd BRITANNIA boaſts,
That heav'n-born freedom guards her chalky coaſts,

If

If pageant kings ſhall dare in chains to bind
The bold productions of the Poet's mind,
To curb inſtructive *Satire*'s manly lays;
Which laſh'd a *Tyrant*, ev'n in NERO's days;----
And ev'ry paltry Garretteer abuſe,
With dull, opprobrious tongue, the BRITISH *Muſe*:
Let them, with all their low-bred arts, ariſe!----
I ſcorn their malice, and thoſe arts deſpiſe:
Tho' they unfold their criticiſing ſtore,
And follow up their trade for evermore,
I'll ſtill purſue, where ſenſe or judgment draws;
Nor once deſire their favour, or applauſe;
But where they rail, my *chiefeſt Trophies* raiſe,
And think their *greateſt Cenſure*, is their *Praiſe*.

F I N I S.